

Asheville City Council
Planning and Economic Development Committee

2:00 p.m., March 11, 2009
Economic Development Office Conference Room

Minutes

Present: Councilwoman Robin Cape, Chair; Vice-Mayor Jan Davis; Councilman Bill Russell

Staff: Gary Jackson, Sam Powers, Sasha Vrtunski, Cathy Ball, Shannon Tuch, Judy Daniel, Maggie Ullman, Mark Combs, Stephanie Monson

The Planning and Economic Development Committee met on March 11, 2009, at 29 Haywood Street. Chair Cape called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes from the January 21, 2009, meeting were approved as written.

2. Updates

Downtown Master Plan

Sasha Vrtunski, Project Manager, gave the update. The public comment period ended February 6. The resulting changes recommended by Goody Clancy were very complex, so more time was needed to discuss them with stakeholders. Members of the Downtown Commission and the Advisory Committee met several times and discussed and gave further comment to the consultants on several strategies. The draft plan is the topic for the Planning and Zoning retreat on Thursday, March 19. It will be presented to P & Z on April 1, and come before Council on May 12. The full draft document will be available on March 24.

UDO Amendment to Flood Ordinance

Cathy Ball, Engineering Director, gave the update (see attached handout). Engineering is proposing revisions to the Floodplain Ordinance to respond to the current economic conditions. The goal is to be consistent with changes recommended by Planning in responding to current economic conditions. There was consensus by the Committee to take these revisions to the Planning and Zoning Committee.

Reengineering and relocations/One Stop Shop, Economic Development and Downtown Police Storefront

Gary Jackson, City Manager, gave the update. Mr. Jackson reported that the current space occupied by the Office of Economic Development is slated to become a downtown police storefront, creating a permanent downtown beat with an office at 29 Haywood Street. Economic Development will move to space in the Planning Department created by a One Stop Shop to be housed at Public Works. This will allow

for closer alignment with the Planning Department and Economic Development, as well as creating a One Stop Shop concept for plan reviews and permitting services. The intent at this time is for the conference room at Economic Development to remain intact, and for the Downtown Association and the Small Business Administration to continue to have office space in the newly created downtown police substation.

Other anticipated organizational changes include modifying the neighborhood coordinator's responsibilities to promoting volunteerism and sponsorships, while moving many of the community relations aspects of the job to the planning department.

Mr. Jackson also reported that staff is prepared to expand energy management into a broader sustainability office, within the City Manager's office, giving the Energy Coordinator a better opportunity to lead and manage intergovernmental relations, and build the partnerships so this can happen.

Incentives for Energy Efficiency and Sustainability

Maggie Ullman, Energy Coordinator, and Mark Combs, Public Works Director, gave the update. The attached Memorandum reports on Phase I of developing green development incentives for the City of Asheville.

Innsbrook Mall

Planning staff has been in contact with Buncombe County officials, and has discussed proposed modifications to the Innsbrook Mall to accommodate County space needs. Chair Cape stated that cooperating would align closely with Council strategic goals to better serve local government relations. The consensus of the Committee was to encourage a dialogue and cooperation between City staff and Buncombe County staff to facilitate potential use of Innsbrook Mall for County facilities. This consensus will be reported back to the Mayor for her consideration.

RFP

Sam Powers, Economic Development Director, gave the update. The city attorney is in the process of drafting a Development Agreement for review by the McKibbin Hotel Group (MHG), based on their November 2008 updated Letter of Intent. The purchase offer is \$2.3 million, which is consistent with the fair market value. The City will condition the sale of the property through conditions, covenants and restrictions. Staff will conduct outreach with stakeholders in the area to update them on the project status. The City continues to be willing to entertain partnership opportunities on developing the public space on Basilica property. Staff will seek to meet with Council in small groups to update them on the draft development agreement, once it is reviewed by MHG.

Mr. Powers also reported that staff continues to meet on a bi-weekly basis on the 51 Biltmore project, as this is a much more complex situation due to the public/private partnerships involved in the project.

Application for EPA Smart Growth Implementation Assistance Program

Stephanie Monson, Urban Planner II with the Office of Economic Development, gave the update (see attached staff report). Staff will be coming to Council on April 14th with a resolution authorizing the City Manager to submit an application for the EPA Smart

Growth Implementation Assistance Program, for the project: East Meets West – Reconnecting our Neighborhoods. The City would be the primary applicant for this proposal but will work closely with the Asheville Design Center and the Asheville Housing Authority as co-applicants. Other community stakeholders could include: WECAN Neighborhood Association, Mountain Housing Opportunities, the River Arts District Association, Riverlink, the Clean Air Community Trust Fund, Land of Sky Regional Council and the Western North Carolina Alliance.

3. Status Reports

4. Presentations

5. Public Comment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.